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Allaah says in the Qur'aan, **"Your Rabb has commanded that you only worship Him and(Render) kind treatment to parents. If any one of the two, or both of them reaches old age by you, then do not even tell them 'Oof!' and do not rebuke them. Speak to them gently. Lower for them the wings of humility out of compassion and say, 'Oh my Rabb! Show mercy to them as they have raised me when I was young."** [Surah Bani Isra'eel, verses 23/24]

Allaah'S FAVOUR

The first command that Allaah issues in this verse is that people must worship and obey Allaah, their Rabb (their Provider and Nurturer). It is Allaah Who gave man all the limbs of his body, as well as the ability to hear, speak, see and understand. Only Allaah provides sustenance to people and only He alleviates their difficulties. He gives life and death, health after illness, peace after distress and patience during times of adversity. Allaah has made man His viceroy on earth.

Allaah'S WORSHIP

Allaah has enjoined certain responsibilities and duties upon man, and has also granted him a certain degree of authority over others. When Allaah commands **"that you only worship Him,"** it means that man must realise his duties to Allaah and fulfil the responsibilities that Allaah desires from him. He must also ensure that the authority he wields in this world is subject to Allaah's decree. The more a person will subject his authority, his temperament and his life to Allaah's commands, the more successful he will be.

Man has the choice to restrict his future progress. He should endeavour to present himself before Allaah on the Day of Qiyamah as an obedient servant, who fulfilled the tasks entrusted to him. His record of deeds should never reflect him as someone who was lazy, disobedient and failing to fulfil his duties.

THE MEANING OF WORSHIP

Allaah's worship and obedience means that a person devotes his entire life to Allaah's service. He should regard himself as Allaah's slave and spend every moment in Allaah's worship. Every deed must be subjected to Allaah's commands, be it sleeping, eating, trading, farming, etc.

CERTAIN DESIRED ACTS OF WORSHIP

A person should never think that he has fulfilled Allaah's right of worship after devoting some time to complete a set procedure of formal worship. Thereafter, he cannot think that he is at liberty to do as he pleases.

The example of this is like an employee who is paid in full for working morning and evening. However, he merely presents himself in the morning and evening to greet his employer. He then leaves to do as he pleases.

BECOME COMPLETE MUSLIMS

It will also be incorrect for a person to only devote himself to formal acts of worship like salaah, recitation of the Qur'aan, Tasbeeh, etc, without paying heed to other commands of Allaah. Such a person will be guilty of a wrong when, despite carrying out these deeds, he neglects to maintain cordial relations with people, have mercy on the young and respect the elderly. Even the noble acts of formal devotion will not absolve him of abstaining from acts like backbiting, lying, cheating, etc.

The example of such a person is like that of an employee who is being paid for some work. However, instead of doing what he is paid to do, he stands before the employer day and night with his hands folded. All day and night, he remains in this position hymning his subservience to the employer and the details of his duties in a most melodious manner. However, he does nothing to contribute to the progress of his company or factory. Islaam has the same opinion of the above Muslim as any person will have of the above employee.

Allaah says in the Qur'aan, **"Oh you who believe! Enter completely into Islam."** This verse urges Muslims to follow Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) to the tee, to obey every command of Allaah, abstain from every prohibition, and to practice on the complete shari'ah.

THE QUR'AAN AND THE AHADEETH ARE AllAAH'S LAWS

Allaah declares, **"These are the limitation set by Allaah, so do not transgress them. Those who transgress the limitations set by Allaah, these people are truly oppressors."**

One can well imagine how a person will treat that employee or servant who only fulfils some of the instructions issued, and ignores the rest. Such is the condition of people who do not carry out all Allaah's commands.

A person should therefore endeavour to subject every aspect of his life to Allaah's commands.

KIND TREATMENT TOWARDS PARENTS

Muslims are bound to foster all relations enjoined by Allaah and sever all relations that He requires man to sever. This must also be done according to the way Allaah has shown. As mentioned earlier, Allaah commands the kind treatment of parents together with His worship. Immediately after commanding His worship, Allaah says that He also commands the **"kind treatment of parents."**
Only Allaah should be worshipped because He created man. It is also Allaah who gave people children. He brought people into existence by means of their parents, whereby it should be understood that people owe their existence to Allaah, as well as his parents. It is for this reason that Allaah commands man to be kind towards his parents after commanding him to worship Allaah.

Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) mentioned that the person who does not attain Jannah by serving his parents is destroyed.

THE FAVOUR OF PARENTS

In a verse of the Qur'aan, Allaah commands, **"Show gratitude to Me and to your parents."** Children should be grateful to their parents because their parents raised them.

A mother experiences extreme difficulty from the time the child is conceived till the time the child is born. She then endures the excruciating pain of birth, where after the trying period of breast-feeding follows. She has to clean the child's mess, endure the hardships, and sacrifice her sleep, rest, wealth, body and soul for the child. This process runs into years.

The father not only loves the child with all his heart, but he has to see to the food, clothes and other needs of the child. He exerts himself to the hilt to provide for the child's comfort. It is for these reasons that man is instructed to obey and act gently towards their parents.

ALLAAH'S PLEASURE LIES IN PLEASING ONE'S PARENTS

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Amr (R.A) reports that Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, "The pleasure of Allaah lies in pleasing the parents, and Allaah's wrath lies in displeasing the parents." [Tirmidhi]

A hadith of Bayhaqi reports Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) as saying that the kind treatment of parents is better than Nafl salaah, charity, fasting, hajj, umrah and jihaad. In fact, better than all other deeds.

Nabi (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) has also mentioned that two doors of Jannah will be opened for the person who passes the morning with both his parents being pleased with him. If only one of them is alive, then only one door is opened. However, if he passes the morning with both his parents angry with him, then two doors to Jahannam will be opened for him. If any one of them is angry with him, then one door of Jahannam will be opened for him. This will apply in all situations, whether his parents treat him well or if they are unjust to him. [Bayhaqi]

Hadhrat Abu Umamah (R.A) reports that a person once asked Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) as to what rights children owe to their parents. Nabi (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) replied, "They are your Jannah or your Jahannam." [Ibn Majah]

This hadith means that one's parents will be a means for entering Jannah if they are kept happy, but will take one to Jahannam if they are displeased.

ONE MAY NOT EVEN TELL HIS PARENTS "OOF"

Allaah says in the aforementioned verse of Surah Bani Isra'eel, **"If any one of the two, or both of them reaches old age by you, then do not even tell them 'Oof!' and do not rebuke them. Speak to them gently."**

Allaah speaks about parents reaching old age because it is generally during the period of old age that they require the service of their children. Fortunate are those people who can serve their parents at this crucial juncture of their lives, and who pray for them.

THE DU'AA FOR ONE'S PARENTS

Allaah says further in the verse, **"Lower for them the wings of humility out of compassion and say, 'Oh my Rabb! Show mercy to them as they have raised me when I was young."** Children should recall the times when they were weak and fragile, unable to fend and care for themselves. It was then that their parents, at the expense of their personal comfort, tended to their children. They did everything to safeguard their children from adversities and difficulties.

When their parents have aged, children should think that they will do their best to serve them, but their service still cannot repay the debt they owe to their parents. It is for this reason that they should also plead to Allaah to shower His mercy on them in both worlds.

A COMPASSIONATE GLANCE AT ONE'S PARENTS

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas (R.A) reports that Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, "The fortunate son who gazes at his parents with compassion, will receive the reward of an accepted hajj for every glance he casts." The Sahaba (R.A) asked, "Even if he looks at them a hundred times daily?" Nabi (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) replied, "Allaah is Extremely Great and Pure." [Bayhaqi]

Hadhrat Aa'isha (R.A) reports from Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) that, when he was shown Jannah, he heard someone reciting the Qur'aan. When he asked who the voice belonged to he received that reply that it was a Sahabi by the name of Hadhrat Haaritha bin Nu'maan (R.A), who served his parents in every condition, and obeyed them. Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) then thrice repeated the words, "Serving one's parents is such a thing!" (i.e. something which would take one to Jannah).

Allaah once told Hadhrat Moosa (A.S), "Oh Moosa! I will record that person as a grateful person, who is kind towards his parents, even though he disobeys Me. However, I will record that person as a disobedient person, who disobeys his parents, even though he obeys Me."

JANNAH LIES AT THE FEET OF THE PARENTS

Nabi (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, "The supplication for a mother on behalf of her child is very speedily accepted." He also mentioned, "Serve your mothers because Jannah lies beneath her feet."

There are several other Ahadeeth, which emphasise the importance of serving one's parents and abstaining from their disobedience.

WHY SHOULD ONE ENDURE THE HARDSHIPS FROM ONE'S PARENTS?

One must patiently endure any hardships forthcoming from one's parents because they endured much worse hardships on account of their children. They remain awake for nights on account of their children and attended to them for days when they are ill. In appreciation of all their efforts, children should be prepared to endure any difficulty forthcoming from his/her parents. In fact, he/she should be prepared to endure thousands of such difficulties.

Parents know no day or night when concerned about their children, and would be grieved over the slightest difficulty that their children suffer. A single frown on the child's face would convert all the happiness of the parents to grief, and a single tear would create untold agony inn their hearts.

THE DESIRE OF ONE'S PARENTS

Parents are always desirous of their children becoming educated and well mannered. They desire that their children become role models of exemplary character, just as they always desire that their children eat the best food and wear best clothing. They always desire that their children lead other children in learning and upright moral behaviour.

It is for these reasons that children should study books that exude such noble moral behaviour, and be prevented from books that contain false stories and praise of evil traits, which lead one to succumb to immorality and indecency.

Parents endeavour to promote morality amongst their children because they regard their children as trusts from Allaah. They realise that they will be disgraced before Allaah on the Day of Qiyamah if they fail to fulfil this duty and be a cause for the deviation of their children. They therefore attempt to make the best arrangements for the proper education of their children, placing them in the care of the most capable teachers.

THE DIFFICULTIES ASSOCIATED WITH RAISING CHILDREN

Is it not fair that a person behave kindly towards those who are so desirous of their proper education and who will stop at nothing to ensure their happiness and comfort? Should a person not obey and serve such people? Should one not be gentle towards people who cleaned one when he was a child, who sacrificed nights of their sleep for one, and who gave one the best of food and clothing even though they could not have the same? Forgetting their favours on him, a person will be amongst the worst of creation if he ever causes difficulty to his parents.

Hereunder follows some verses wherein Allaah emphasises obedience and appreciation of parents:

"We emphatically commanded man with regard to his parents. His mother carried him in weakness upon weakness and his weaning is after two years. (The command was) Express gratitude to Me and to your parents. Your return will be to Me." [Surah Luqmaan, verse 14]

Allaah emphasises the rights of the mother in this verse because she endured great suffering while bearing the child, whereafter she still suffered the hardship of breast-feeding. She also made untold sacrifices for the child's comfort. Therefore, a person has to express more gratitude to her.

"We emphatically commanded man to be kind towards his parents. His mother bore him with great difficulty and delivered him with great difficulty. His bearing and weaning are thirty months. Then, when the time arrives that he comes of age and he reaches the age of forty, he says, 'Oh my Rabb! Grant me the ability to show gratitude for Your bounty upon me and upon my parents, and to perform righteous deeds, pleasing to You. Grant this ability to my offspring as well. Verily, I turn to You and I am amongst those who submit to You." [Surah Ahqaaf, verse 15]

Like the previous verse the above verse also lays more emphasis on the rights of the mother because of the great hardship with which she bore and delivered the child. She carried the child everywhere she went, and, after the arduous birth, she fed him on her breasts for two years. The father also bore many hardships as the child grew.

There is no doubt that they did this because of their natural love and affection for the child, but it should also be natural for the child to reciprocate this love towards the parents in appreciation of what they did. This should spur them to be obedient to their parents.

THE CURSE OF HADHRAT JIBREEL (A.S)

Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) once ascended the pulpit. As he took the first step, he said, "Aameen!" When he mounted the second step, he again said, "Aameen!" And then repeated "Aameen!" upon taking the third step.

When he descended from the pulpit, the Sahaba (R.A) said, "We have seen you mount the pulpit in a manner that we have never noticed before." Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) explained the reason saying, "When I climbed the first step, Hadhrat Jibreel (A.S) said, 'May that person be destroyed who finds the month of Ramadhaan and does not secure forgiveness for himself.' Thereupon I said 'Aameen!' As I mounted the second step, he said, 'May that person be destroyed who does not recite durood when your name is taken before him.' I said Aameen! to this as well. When I climbed the third step he said, 'May that person be destroyed, who finds one or both of his parents in old age and still does not secure his admission into Jannah.' Thereupon I also said, 'Aameen!"

One can well imagine the ill effects of the person who falls prey to the curse of Hadhrat Jibreel (A.S), to which Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said Aameen!

THE EMPHASIS ON OBEYING ONE'S PARENTS

Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, "The father is the best door to Jannah. Now (by obeying him) you may protect this door, or (by disobeying him) you may destroy the door."

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood (R.A) reports that he asked Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) as to which act was most liked by Allaah. Nabi (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) replied, "To perform salaah on time." He then asked what act was most liked after this. Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) said, "Kind treatment of parents." When he again asked what followed in merit, Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) replied, "Jihaad in Allaah's way." [Bukhari and Muslim]

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Qais (R.A) narrates that a person once requested permission from Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) to participate in jihaad. Nabi (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) asked him whether his parents were alive. When he replied in the affirmative, Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) told him that the reward for jihaad is to be found in their service. [Bukhari and Muslim]

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar (R.A) reports that a person came to Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) saying, "I have come to pledge my allegiance to you that I will migrate. However, I have left my parents weeping over my departure." Nabi (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) told him, "Return to them and make them laugh just as you had made them cry." [Abu Dawood]

Hadhrat Anas bin Maalik (R.A) reports that a person came to Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) to seek permission for jihaad. When Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) asked him whether his parents wee alive, he said that only his mother was alive. Thereupon, Nabi (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) told him, "Display kindness towards her. If you serve her well, you will not only receive the reward of jihaad, but of hajj and umrah as well." [Abu Ya'la and Tabrani]

Hadhrat Mu'aawiya (R.A) narrates that a person once asked Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) whether he should participate in jihaad. Nabi (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) asked, "Do you have a mother?" When he replied in the affirmative, Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, "Stay with her because Jannah lies at her feet (i.e. you will attain Jannah by serving her)." [Nasai]
Hadhrat Anas (R.A) reports that Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) said, "Whoever desires that his lifespan be lengthened and that his sustenance be increased should treat his parents well and maintain good relations with his relatives." [Ahmed]

Hadhrat Mu'aadh (R.A) reports that Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) once said, "Congratulations to those who obey their parents. May Allaah lengthen their lives." [Haakim]

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah (R.A) narrates that someone once asked Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) as to whom he should give priority in service and kind treatment. Nabi (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) replied, "Your mother." "Who next?" was the next question. Thereafter, Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) thrice more repeated, "Your mother" to the next three questions. It was only on the fourth question that he said, "Your father." [Bukhari and Muslim]

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar (R.A) reports that someone once said to Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam), "I have committed a grave sin, can I ever be forgiven?" "Is your mother alive?" asked Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam). When the person said that she was alive, Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) told him, "Yes. Treat your mother well." [Tirmidhi] This hadith teaches that kind treatment of parents serve as an expiation for sins.

Someone asked, "Oh Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam)! What rights of the parents are due from their children?" Nabi (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) replied, "They are both your Jannah or your Jahannam." Therefore, if the parents are treated well and cared for, their children will be admitted into Jannah. However, if the children do not fulfil the rights of their parents, these children will enter Jahannam.

Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) stated, "Besides shirk, Allaah may forgive all sins if He pleases. However, disobedience to parents is such a sin that the adverse repercussions are experienced in this world, as well as in the Hereafter."

Nabi (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) also said that all sins are such that Allaah may postpone the punishment therefor. However, the sin of causing grief to one's parents is so severe that the punishment will be suffered before death in this very world. [Haakim]

A person once asked Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam), "I perform salaah, fast and pay zakaah. What shall my reward be?" Nabi (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) replied, "On the Day of Qiyamah, you will be with Nabis, the righteous and the martyrs, on condition that you do not disobey your parents." [Ahmed, Tabrani]

Another reports, "The fragrance of Jannah reaches a distance of five hundred years. However, the person who disobeys his parents is so unfortunate that he will be deprived of it (i.e. he will be extremely far from Jannah)." [Tabrani]

A hadith of Ibn Aasim reports that the optional and obligatory acts of worship of the one who disobeys his parents will not be accepted.

Another hadith reports that Allaah has undertaken never to admit into Jannah the person who disobeys his parents. [Haakim]

Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) has also mentioned that the following sins are so grave that they prevent all good deeds from being accepted:

- Shirk.
- Disobedience to parents.
- Deserting the battlefield.

Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) also said that the very major sins are (1) ascribing partners to Allaah, (2) disobedience to parents. [Abridged from Bukhari and Muslim]

Nabi (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said that the following people will never enter Jannah:
- **The one who disobeys his parents.**
- **The cuckold.**
- **The woman who dresses like a man. [Nasai, Bazzaar]**

Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) once said, "Swearing one's parents is a major sin." Astonished, the Sahaba (R.A) asked, "How can anyone swear his parents?" Th Prophet (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) replied, "When a person swears the father of another, he retaliates by swearing the first person's father. Similarly, when a person swears the mother of another, he retaliates by swearing the first person's mother." [Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawood]

Another hadith reports that one of the major sins is for a person to curse his parents. [Bukhari, Muslim]

THE KALIMAH CANNOT BE UTTERED AT THE TIME OF DEATH

Hadhrat Anas (R.A) reports that there was a person during the time of Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) by the name of Alqama (R.A). He exerted himself greatly for the Deen and gave a lot of charity. It once happened that he fell seriously ill. His wife summoned Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) via another woman.

Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) sent Hadhrat Ali, Bilaal, Salmaan Faarsi and Ammaar (R.A) to access the situation. They found Hadhrat Alqama (R.A) in the throes of death and, try as they may, they could not get him to recite the kalimah. Hadhrat Bilaal (R.A) reported the situation to Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam).

Nabi (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) asked whether the parents of Hadhrat Alqama (R.A) were alive. Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) was informed that his mother was alive, and that she was extremely old. Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) sent Hadhrat Bilaal (R.A) to request her to come to him, otherwise he would go to her.

When the old lady received the message, she said, "May my soul be sacrificed for Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam)! I shall go to him." She then took the support of a stick and walked to meet Nabi (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam). When she arrived in the presence of Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam), she greeted with salaam and sat down.

Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) replied to her greeting and told her, "Do reply truthfully to whatever I shall ask you. If you lie, I will be informed thereof by revelation. Tell me. What kind of a person is Alqama?" She replied, "He performs a lot of salaah, fasts often and his spending in charity cannot even be estimated."

Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) then asked her, "How is the relationship between the two of you?" She replied, "I am angry with him." When Nabi (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) asked her the reason for this, she said, "Because he gives preference to his wife over me. He listens to her more than he listens to me and accepts what she has to say."

Nabi (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) said, "The displeasure of his mother is preventing him from reciting the kalimah." Turning to Hadhrat Bilaal (R.A), Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) said, "Bilaal! Gather some wood so that I may burn Alqama." The old lady was startled and asked, "Oh Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam)! Are you going to burn my son, the apple of my eye? How can I tolerate this?"

Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) told her, "Allaah's punishment is more severe and eternal. If you wish that Allaah forgives your son then be pleased with him. By Allaah! His salaah, fasting, etc can never be of use without your pleasure." She immediately raised her hands and said, "Oh Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam)! I call yourself and all those present here to witness that I an pleased with Alqama!"

Nabi (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) then sent Hadhrat Bilaal (R.A) to see whether Alqama (R.A) could recite the kalimah. He said, "It is just possible that she has declared her pleasure with Alqama because of me, without being pleased with him from her heart." As Hadhrat Bilaal (R.A) entered the door, he heard Hadhrat Alqama (R.A) loudly reciting, "Laa ilaaha IllAllaah." Hadhrat Bilaal (R.A) told the people that the displeasure of Alqama's mother had handicapped his tongue.

Hadhrat Alqama (R.A) passed away the same day. Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) performed the funeral (Janazah) salaah and then told the people, "Listen, Oh gathering of Muhajireen and Ansaar! Allaah's curse is on the person who disobeys and hurts his mother. The curse of the angels and all of mankind is also on him. Neither are his Faraaidh nor his Nawaafil accepted till he repents to Allaah, makes up with his mother, and serves her so that she becomes happy. Allaah's pleasure pivots on the pleasure of the mother, and His wrath pivots on her anger." [Ahmed, Tabrani]

TO BE ESTEEMED IN EVERY HEART

Obedience and service to one's parents is a means of earning the respect of all people. By attaining this quality, together with noble moral, humility and etiquette, a person will be revered wherever he may be.

Do people like and respect a person who is foul mouthed? Do they like a person who is ill mannered? Do they like to associate with a person who is of a jealous nature? Indeed, people seek the companionship of those who are well mannered, cultured, understanding, and sweet tongued.

DEEN IS THE CAPITAL FOR THIS WORLD

The efforts invested in the education of every child is with the view to make them attain the capital to progress in both worlds. By ensuring that he is successful in his learning, a child will earn the pleasure and appreciation of his parents. In this was, he will gain Allaah’s pleasure as well. Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) has mentioned that Allaah is pleased with the person whose parents are pleased with him.

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah (R.A) reports from Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) that the du’aas of the following three people are not rejected:

1. The oppressed person, when he prays to Allaah against the oppressor.
2. The traveller.
3. The parents, when they pray for their children.

Hadhrat Abu Bakr (R.A) narrates that Nabi (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) once asked them if he should not inform them of the gravest sins. When they requested to be informed, Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) told them that shirk and disobedience to parents were amongst the worst sins.

Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) said, “Allaah’s pleasure is in the pleasure of the parents and Allaah’s displeasure lies in the displeasure of the parents.” Since Allaah has ordered that the parents be pleased, He will be displeased if they are displeased.

Another hadith reports that Nabi (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, “For the person who visits the grave of both his parents, or that of one of them every Friday, Allaah will forgive him and ordain his safety from Jahannam.” {Hadith is weak.}

HADHRAT MOOSA (A.S)’S COMPANION ON JANNAH

Hadhrat Moosa (A.S) once asked Allaah to show him who will be his companion in Jannah. Allaah instructed him to proceed to a certain place in the bazaar, where he will see a butcher of a certain description. Allaah told him that this person will be his companion in Jannah. When Hadhrat Moosa (A.S) reached the butcher’s shop he remained standing there till after sunset (to notice the reason for this person’s noble position in Jannah).

As the butcher closed for the day, he took a piece of meat home in a basket. Hadhrat Moosa (A.S) asked him if he would keep another Muslim with him. The butcher agreed and took Hadhrat Moosa (A.S) home with him. After cooking the meat, the butcher took out another basket. There was an extremely old woman in the basket, who resembled a little bird. He removed her from the basket and fed her some gravy with a spoon. He fed her and gave her water to drink till she was satiated. He then washed her clothes, dried it and dressed her again. Thereafter, he replaced her in the basket.

She uttered a few words as a prayer for her son. Hadhrat Moosa (A.S) mentioned that he heard her praying to Allaah to make her son Hadhrat Moosa (A.S)’s companion in Jannah. The butcher then hung the basket on a nail. When Hadhrat Moosa (A.S) asked him to explain what was going on, he replied that the old lady was his mother, who was too frail and old to even move.

Thereupon, Hadhrat Moosa (A.S) told him, “Congratulations to you! I am Moosa and you are to be my companion in Jannah. By the blessings of Allaah’s pure names and the best off creation, Muhammad (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam), Allaah has made the road to Jannah easy for us.”

ADVICE TO HADHRAT MOOSA (A.S)

Hadhrat Moosa (A.S) once asked Allaah for some advice, whereupon Allaah advised him to treat his mother well. When he again asked for advice, Allaah repeated the advice. He continued to request for more advice, and continued to receive the same reply till he was told on the ninth occasion that he should treat his father kindly.

Allaah then told him, "In this world, I shall be the Protecting Friend of the person who treats his parents well. I shall be his companion in the grave and merciful towards him when he is resurrected (on the Day of Qiyamah). I shall be his guide across the bridge of Siraat, and will speak to him directly in Jannah.

A MEANS OF OPENING THE MIND

Hadhrat Saleem bin Ayyub (A.R), a famous scholar from amongst the Shaafi'ee school of jurisprudence, says, "I was ten years old, but was still unable to even learn Surah Faatiha. Some learned scholars advised me to request my mother to pray for me to be proficient in the knowledge of Qur'aan and Ahadeeth. My mother complied."

Ibnus Subki (A.R) reports that (after his mother's prayer), Saleem (A.R) became an Imaam, unparalleled by any other. He also became such a proficient rider that none could even reach his trail.

A BOULDER MOVES

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar (R.A) reports from Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) that three people travelled on a journey in bygone times. When it began to rain, they sought refuge in a cave. As they waited for the rain to abate, a boulder fell in front of the cave's entrance, sealing off their exit. They decided amongst themselves that only truthfulness and sincerity will save them. They agreed that each of them should therefore pray to Allaah for help, mentioning a deed that they felt was done with sincerity.

The first person prayed to Allaah saying, "Oh Allaah! You know that I once employed a person, whom I promised to pay with a fixed amount of rice. However, he left the rice behind when he departed. I then planted the rice, whereafter it flourished till it paid a reasonable sum. I used this sum to purchase a valuable bull. When the person arrived after a while to collect his wage, I presented the bull to him. When he protested that his wage was an amount of rice, I explained to him that the bull was a result of the rice. He then took the bull with him. Oh Allaah! If this deed was done solely for You, then move this boulder." As a result of this du'aa, Allaah moved the boulder a little.

The second person prayed thus, “Oh Allaah! You know well that I always used to bring goat’s milk to my aged parents. I happened to be delayed one night and, waiting for me, my parents fell asleep without the milk. When I arrived, I did not deem it appropriate to wake them, but stood by their bed with the milk the entire night till they awoke. (He did this despite the fact that he and his children remained hungry). Oh Allaah! If this deed was done solely for You, then move this boulder.” As a result of this du’aa, Allaah moved the boulder a little more.

The third person prayed, “Oh Allaah. You know well that I was in love with my cousin and that she refused several of my advances. Eventually, when I enticed her with a hundred gold coins, she agreed. As I was about to complete the adulterous act, she exclaimed, ‘Fear Allaah and do not break the seal illegally!’ Hearing this, I immediately withdrew. Oh Allaah! If this deed was done solely for You, then move this boulder.” As a result of this du’aa, Allaah moved the boulder, due to which they were able to escape.
Hadhrat Abu Hurairah (R.A) reports that Nabi (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, “Whoever believes in Allaah and the Last Day should maintain good relations with his relatives, entertain guests, and only speak good words. Otherwise, he should rather remain silent.” [Bukhari and Muslim]

A COW’S HIDE FULL OF GOLD

The books of tafseer record an incident of a person who had a son and a calf. On one occasion, he took the calf to a forest and prayed to Allaah thus, “Oh Allaah! I am placing this calf in your custody for my son till he grows up.” Saying this, he passed away. The calf grew up in the forest and always fled from people.

The son grew up to be an excellent son to him mother. He divided the nights into three parts. He used the first part of the night to tend to his mother, the second to sleep, and the third to worship Allaah. At daybreak, he used to gather firewood and sell it in the marketplace. He also divided his earnings into three parts. He contributed a part to charity, spend a third on his needs, and gave the other third to his mother. One day, his mother told him, “Son! Your father has left a calf for you in his estate, which he has handed in Allaah’s care. You will find the calf in a certain forest. You should ask for the calf by supplicating to the Rabb of Hadhrat Ibraheem (A.S), Hadhrat Isma'eel (A.S) and Hadhrat Is'haaq (A.S). Allaah will then restore the trust to you. You will recognise the calf because she will appear as if the rays of the sun are emanating from her hide. She has been named ‘Mudh’hiba’ because of her golden appearance.”

Consequently, the boy proceeded to the forest and found the cow grazing. He called to her saying, “I summon you on oath of the Rabb of Hadhrat Ibraheem (A.S), Hadhrat Isma'eel (A.S) and Hadhrat Is'haaq (A.S).” When the cow came to him, he took her by ear and led her away. The cow spoke by Allaah’s command saying, “Oh he who is obedient to his mother! Ride me, it will be better for you.” He refused the offer, saying that his mother did not instruct him to do so. Thereupon, the cow said, “By Allaah! If you had rode me, you would never have had any control over me thereafter. Lead on! Even if you have to command the mountains to uproot themselves, they would do so because of the blessings of you being obedient to your mother.”
The boy brought the cow home to his mother. She addressed him saying, “Oh my son! Gathering wood every day is an extremely arduous task. Go and sell this cow to earn something.” When he asked his mother about the price, she told him to sell the cow for three dinaars (gold coins, which was the average price at that time). However, she added that he should not sell without her prior consent.

When the boy reached the marketplace, Allaah sent an angel in the guise of a human to test the boy’s obedience to his mother. The angel offered him six dinaars on condition that he did not consult with his mother first. The boy refused saying, “Even if you have to fill the hide of this cow I gold, I will not sell without my mother’s consent.”

The boy then returned to his mother with the offer. She then instructed him not to sell the cow for less than six dinaars. Again, she told him not to sell without taking her consent first. When the boy returned, he informed the angel of his mother's decision. The angel then offered him twelve dinaars if he did not consult with his mother. Again the boy refused. When he informed his mother of the new offer, she told him that the person must be an angel who was sent to test him. She then advised him to ask the angel whether they should sell the cow or not.

When he asked the angel, the latter advised them not sell the cow yet because soon, the people of Moosa bin Imraan [Hadhrat Moosa (A.S)] will want to purchase the cow from them to settle a murder dispute. He told them that they should only sell the cow if they were paid the cow's hide full of gold.

Consequently, when a murder was disputed amongst the Bani Isra'eel, Allaah commanded them to slaughter a cow matching the description of the boy's cow. Allaah had planned this so that the boy could be rewarded for his obedience to his mother. The Bani Isra'eel bought the cow, slaughtered it, and struck the corpse with a portion of the flesh. Allaah caused the deceased to come back to life and inform the people that his cousin had murdered him. The cousin was thus deprived of the inheritance. This story is referred to in Surah Baqara, where Allaah says, **"When you murdered a soul, then began casting the blame on each other, while Allaah was to unveil what you concealed. We said, 'Strike it with a piece thereof.' Thus does Allaah bring the dead back to life and show you His signs so that you may understand."** [verses 72/73]

THE PUNISHMENT FOR DISOBEYING ONE'S MOTHER

Hadhrat Awaam bin Hawshab (A.R) says that he was once visiting a locality when, after the Asr salaah, he noticed that a grave in the graveyard spit open. A person, with the head of a donkey emerged from the grave and brayed thrice. Thereafter, he returned to his grave.

Hadhrat Awaam (A.R) then saw an old woman cutting wool. A lady asked him if he recognised the woman, to which he replied in the negative. The lady informed him that the old lady was the mother of the person in the grave. She told him that the man was a habitual drinker and, when he returned home in the evenings, his mother would tell him, "Oh my son! Fear Allaah! How much longer will you keep drinking." In reply, he would tell her, "Do not bray like a donkey!" Subsequently, the person died after Asr one day. Therefore, his corpse rises every day after Asr and brays thrice.

Obedience to parents is of paramount importance, even though they may be Mushrikeen. Allaah says, **"If they force you to ascribe such partners to Me, about which you have no knowledge, then do not obey them, but cordially associate with them in this world."** [Surah Luqmaan, verse 15]

A Sahabi (R.A) reports that they were once sitting in the company of Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) when a person came to him saying, "Oh Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam)! Is there any service left to be rendered to deceased parents whereby they be rewarded?" Nabi (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) replied, "Yes. Pray for mercy on them and for their forgiveness. Fulfil their pledges on their behalf and maintain all those relations that they maintained. You should also entertain their friends. If a person had been disobedient to his parents, he must continuously seek forgiveness on their behalf after their demise and pray for them. Allaah will then record him amongst those who were obedient to their parents." [Abu Dawood]

Hadhrat Anas (R.A) narrates from Nabi (sallAllaahu-alaihi-wasallam) that it is possible for the person who disobeyed and troubled his parents (or one of them) to be recorded as an obedient child after their demise if he makes du'a for them and seeks forgiveness from Allaah on their behalf. [Bayhaqi]

A STORY OF HADHRAT BAYAZEED (A.R)

Hadhrat Bayazeed Bistami (A.R) narrates that his mother once asked him for water, which he brought for her. When he arrived, she had already fallen asleep. He did want to disturb her sleep, so he remained waiting there till she awoke. However, the night was extremely cold, due to which the condensation froze the glass to his hands. Later, when her eyes opened, she asked for the water. As she took the water from his hands, his skin, still frozen to the glass, ripped off.

Shocked at what happened, his mother asked him what had happened. When he narrated the story to her, she prayed to Allaah thus, "Oh Allaah! I am pleased with him. You also be pleased with him."

He also relates that his mother never touched any doubtful food throughout her pregnancy with him. He also relates that he was twenty years old when his mother called him to sleep one night. Although he wanted to rather spend the night in worship, he responded to his mother's call. He held his hand on her back as he recited Surah Ikhlaas till he felt his hand becoming numb. He then though to himself that the hand is his own, whereas his mother's right is Allaah's, so he held his hand in position so as not to disturb her. He says that he eventually recited Surah Ikhlaas eleven thousand times, and his hand had by then become completely paralysed.

After his demise, some people saw him flying Jannah, hymning Allaah's glory. When they asked him about the reason for his lofty position, he replied that he attained it because of his service to his parents and his patience upon adversities.

Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) mentioned that those who obey their parents and Allaah will be in the highest ranks of the Iliyyeen (the high echelons of Jannah).

THE PUNISHMENT FOR GIVING PREFERENCE TO ONE'S WIFE OVER ONE'S MOTHER

Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) has mentioned that Allaah's angels constantly curse the person who gives preference to his wife over his mother. None of his optional or compulsory deeds are accepted.

In his Fataawa (rulings) Imaam Nawawi (A.R) writes that a person may give his wife a more generous allowance than what he gives his mother, on condition that his wife requires the sum and his mother has sufficient for herself. He also adds that the mother should not be made aware of the fact that he is giving his wife more.

THE REWARD FOR OBEYING ONE'S FATHER

STORY ONE: A father had three sons. When he fell ill in old age, the eldest son told the other two that they may share the inheritance amongst themselves and he will tend to the ailing father. The two happily agreed. He then cared for the father till the father passed away.

After the demise, he beheld someone in a dream telling him to go to a certain place, where he will find a gold coin. He asked the person whether there will be any blessings in the coin. When the person told him that there would not be any, he did not follow the instruction, and forsook the coin. The following night he again beheld the person telling him to get ten gold coins from a certain location. Upon inquiry, when the person again said that there will be no blessings in the coins, he paid no attention to the instruction.

Thereafter, he saw the person again, telling him that he should collect one coin from a certain place. This time the person said that the coin will be blessed. Consequently, he collected the coin, with which he bought a fish. As he was cutting the fish, he found two valuable gems in the fish's stomach. He sold these gems to the king of the time for a price of sixty thousand coins. He then beheld some on in a dream telling him, "This is on account of the service you rendered to your father."

STORY TWO: Hadhrat Dhun Noon Misri (A.R) reports that he was once travelling on a ship, when someone lost an article. People began asking each other whether they had seen the article and, like the others, Hadhrat Dhun Noon (A.R) also posed the question to an African slave on board. The slave turned to the ocean and said, "Oh fish of the sea! I ask you on oath by Allaah, that each of you should bring a gem in your mouths. He had hardly completed the command, when every fish appeared with a gem in it's mouth. When this occurred, the slave leapt into the water reciting, **"You alone do we worship and only Your assistance do we seek."**

Hadhrat Dhun Noon (A.R) asked the slave as to what deed he performed to achieve this status. The slave replied, "Allaah's obedience and obedience to my parents." Saying this, he disappeared.

STORY THREE: On the way to Shaam, as Hadhrat Moosa (A.S) left Antioch, he grew extremely tired. Allaah instructed him to proceed to a certain mountain, where he would find one of Allaah's devotees. Allaah told him to ask the person for some transport.

When Hadhrat Moosa (A.S) reached the mountain, he found the person performing salaah. When the person completed, Hadhrat Moosa (A.S) addressed him thus: "Oh servant of Allaah! I require some transport." The person looked to the sky and addressed a cloud saying, "Oh cloud! Come down, and take this person wherever he wants to go." The cloud came to the ground, whereupon Hadhrat Moosa (A.S) mounted it.

Allaah then told Hadhrat Moosa (A.S) why he had accorded this status to the person. When this person's mother was about to leave the world, she expressed a desire, which he promptly fulfilled. Thereupon she made the following duaa: "Oh Allaah! Fulfil his wishes just as he has fulfilled mine." Allaah added, "Even if he wants Me to convert the earth into the sky and the sky into the earth, I shall do so for him."

THE REWARD FOR FULFILLING A FATHER'S BEQUEST.

A father from the Bani Isra'eel once told his son at his deathbed, "Oh son! Never swear by Allaah's name; not truthfully, nor falsely. And pay off my debts." When the father had passed away, people started flocking to the son to collect their debts. He paid so many debts that he became bankrupt and was forced to leave the town.

He therefore, left with his wife and two sons by ship. Fate had it that they were shipwrecked and each member of the family were separated from each other, drifting on separate pieces of debris. The man was marooned on an island where he found no other soul. He then heard a voice telling him, "Oh one who was kind to his parents! Allaah's will has decreed that you receive a treasure." He was then instructed to proceed to a certain location, where he found the promised treasure.

Allaah sent some other people to the island, who received phenomenal treatment from the person. Gradually, the news spread that the person was extremely generous and noble. People began flocking to the island and settled down there till it became a thriving city, with the person as it's king. When the king's eldest son, heard about the news, he also left for the city. When he met the king, the king treated him extremely well and made him amongst his courtiers. However, they never realised that they were father and son. In a similar manner, the younger son also became one of the royal courtiers, not knowing about his father and brother.

The wife's story was different. After being shipwrecked, she was washed ashore on another island, where she was married to someone. After some time, when her new husband heard about the generous king of the other island, he took his wife and left for the island. When their ship harboured, the man left his wife on board and proceeded to the island to present a gift to the king. The king treated him well and requested him to stay the night. The person excused himself because he needed to return to the ship to care for his wife, who had nobody with her. The king set his heart as ease, telling him that he would send someone to guard her for the night. Consequently, he sent the two brothers to the ship.

When the two reached the ship, they decided that they would have to keep awake the entire night because of the duty entrusted to them. As a result, they began talking. The first brother related the account of how he was shipwrecked with his parents and little brother, whose name was the same as his companion that night. When the other brother asked the first one about the names of his father and mother, they realised that they were the same two brothers and embraced each other with joy.

The woman, who was really their mother, remained listening to them that night. When her husband returned to the ship that night, he found her extremely distressed. He flew into a towering rage and went with her to the king, relating the incident to him. The king summoned his two courtiers and asked the woman what they had done. She requested the king to command them to repeat their stories of the previous night.

When they did so, the king leapt from his throne and embraced the two exclaiming, "By Allaah! You are both my sons!" Unable to contain herself any longer, the woman burst out, "By Allaah! I am your mother!" Thus did Allaah reunite the family.

ANOTHER STORY.

It once occurred that a pious person served his ailing mother for years, each time he intended to go for hajj, she prevented him, saying that she has none to care for her. Each year she told him that she may leave the world while he was away. In this way, he failed to perform hajj for many years, eventually he resolved to leave irrespective of his mother's protests. When she came to know of his preparations for hajj, she again pleaded with him not to leave her. Plead as she may, he was not to be convinced.

He grew angry at her pleas and said to her that every year she anticipates that she may pass away, but she has not left yet. She implored him to postpone his hajj for another year because she would certainly die that year. However, he still left. As he left she supplicated to Allaah thus: "Oh Allaah! This youngster has left me and turned his face away from me. Do not hear his pleas and do not show Your mercy to him. Punish him severely, just as he has hurt me."

As the son proceeded, he spent the night in a Masjid of a certain village. That night, he performed wudhu and began to perform his salaah in the Masjid. It so happened that a thief stole something from a nearby home and fled to the Masjid when people began to pursue him. Noticing the person in the Masjid, he hid the stolen goods in the masjid and escaped over the wall of the Masjid.

Since the people saw the thief entering the Masjid and none had seen him leave, they surrounded the Masjid. When they entered, they were surprised to see a thief performing salaah with the stolen goods in his possession. Nevertheless, they beat him the entire night and took him to the governor the following morning.

They told the governor that this thief deserved a greater punishment because he also pretended to be a pious person and placed stolen goods in Allaah's house. As a result, the decree was issued that his hand be cut as punishment for stealing, that his eyes be removed for pretending to be a pious person, and that his legs be amputated because he had taken stolen goods in to the Masjid.

It was then decided that he be taken through the streets of the city with an announcer calling, "This is the punishment of a person who pretends to be pious, who steals and then hides the stolen goods in a Masjid!" The pious man told the announcer to rather announce, "This is the punishment of a person who refused to listen to his mother and who insisted on going for hajj." When people asked him the reason for this, he declined from informing them. However, when they insisted on knowing, he related the incident to them.

The people were extremely remorseful when they realised their error, and took him back to the governor. The governor apologised for the folly, but the pious man said, "It is not your fault. This is my punishment for disobeying my mother." [Mathnawi]

The Qur'aan emphasises the obedience of parents in several verses. Allaah says, **"Your Rabb has commanded that you only worship Him and kind treatment of parents."**

Another verse of the Qur'aan states, **"Worship Allaah, do not ascribe partners to Him, treat your parents kindly and your relatives as well."**

These wee the rights of parents. We will now discuss some of the rights that parents owe to their children.

THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

When a child comes into the world without the ability to speak, he seems no more than a moving doll or a little animal. His actions are not studied in great depth, and many actions are even overlooked. Once the child's eyes begin to focus, he tries to understand and perceive things to the best of his limited ability. These are only known to others once the child begins to talk.

Of course, the first perception he successfully manages is to recognise his parents. It is then by means of this relationship that the child learns the other facts of life. Thereafter the child progresses intellectually and daily adds to his memory. It is therefore imperative that the parents do not ignore this ability of the child for even a moment. They should pay attention to every movement of the child, so that these do not lead to errors in later life. These early movements and initial actions contribute to his further development as a successful individual.

The parents now have to exploit the dormant potential of the child and decorate him with the gems of love, etiquette, cleanliness, etc. These will all shine through in later life, as the child acquires further education. The general complaint of ill behaviour nowadays is primarily due to a lack of a proper religious upbringing and spoiling the child.

Affection can be shown in two ways. The intelligent form of showing affection will mean everything to a child, while the second type will ruin him. This type is a blind affection, which will spoil the child. Those parents who overlook every tantrum and obstinacy of the child, are laying such a foundation that will be a source of regret for them in later years.

There was a person in my locality who used to rebuke his children every time they were mischievous. If the misconduct was severe, he would isolate them in a room. However, his mother took great exception to these measures. She would insult her son every time he took these measures to reform the children. As the children caught on to this scenario, they would complain to their grandmother every time their father scolded them. She would then reprimand him and warn him not to ever repeat the treatment.

Eventually, the children became the worst children in the neighbourhood. They would be the cause for most of the problems that took place, and others would do their utmost to avoid them. All this was a result of the excessive blind affection that the grandmother displayed. This incident is just an example. Another major cause of such delinquency is frequent fighting between the parents.

TEACHING MANNERS TO CHILDREN.

Hadhrat Jaabir (R.A) reports from Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) that teaching manners to a child is better than spending in charity. [Tirmidhi]

Hadhrat Ayyub bin Hadhrat Abu Moosa Ash'ari (R.A) reports that Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, "A father cannot do a greater favour to his child than teaching him manners." [Tirmidhi]

KEEPING A GOOD NAME FOR A CHILD.

Hadhrat Abu Dardaa (R.A) narrates that Nabi (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, "People! You will be called by your names and the names of your fathers on the Day of Qiyamah. So keep good names." [Abu Dawood]

Names that have evil meanings and those that relate a person to be the slave of anyone besides Allaah must not be kept.

THE MOST BELOVED NAMES TO Allaah.

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar (R.A) reports from Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) that the names that refer to one as Allaah's slave, and that display Allaah's mercy, are most beloved to Allaah. [Bukhari]
Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar (R.A) also reported from Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) that the name Allaah loves most is Abdullaah (the salve of Allaah). [Muslim]

Hadhrat Wahab Jushami (R.A) reports that Nabi (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said, "Adopt the names of the Ambiya (A.S). The names Allaah loves are Abdullaah and Abdur Rahmaan." [Abu Dawood]

BAD NAMES SHOULD BE CHANGED TO GOOD ONES.

Hadhrat Abu Hurairah (R.A) reports that the name of Hadhrat Abu Salma (R.A)'s daughter was Barra, but Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) changed her name to Zaynab. [Bukhari]

Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) also changed the name of Hadhrat Umar (R.A)'s daughter from Aasiya to Jameela. [Tirmidhi, Muslim]

In a similar manner, Nabi (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) changed a person's name from Shihaab to Hishaam and another person's name from Harb (war) to Salam (peace). A person used to be called Sha'bud Dalaala (valley of deviation). Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) changed his name to Sha'bul Huda (valley of guidance).

While a certain person's name was Aasiy (disobedient), Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) changed it to Mu'min. When a child was born in a place where nothing grew, he was named Afra (barren land). Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) changed his name to Khadraa (a fertile land). It occurred thereafter, that the same piece of land became lush and green.

THE CASE BETWEEN A FATHER AND A SON.

A father and a son once appeared before Hadhrat Umar (R.A). the father claimed that the son did not fulfil his rights, did not obey him, and did not show respect to him. When Hadhrat Umar (R.A) asked the son to plead his case, he asked, "Does the son only owe rights to the father, or does the son also have certain rights upon the father?"

Hadhrat Umar (R.A) replied that it is the right of the child that:

- The father marries an upright woman.
- That he gives the child a good name, which will bring blessings.
- That he educated him in religion.

The son then said, "Ask my father what rights has he fulfilled! My mother was a slave girl, whose manners were like that of a slave. He then named me Ju'l, which is a dirt worm. He also never taught me anything about religion." Hadhrat Umar (R.A) dismissed the case, stating to the father that he was more guilty than the son by not fulfilling his rights.

Many people complain about the misconduct of their children, without realising that they have not fulfilled the rights of their children. One of the greatest rights that the parents owe to their children is to give them a religious education and teach then proper manners. They should be made aware of Allaah's commands, and urged to fulfil these. If they fail to comply, corrective measures should be take in a pleasant manner.

THE EFFECT OF PARENT'S BEHAVIOUR.

Children always imitate the actions they see their parents do. Experience proves that children will be pious if the parents adopt piety before the child is born. The deeds of the parents even before the birth of the child certainly have an effect on the child.

THE ILL-MANNERED CHILD OF A SAINT.

When people noticed that the son of a saint was extremely ill mannered and disobedient, they inquired the reason from him. The saint said, "I once ate at the home of a rich person. The food aroused me to cohabit with my wife that night. This child was born as a result of this union. This child is therefore a product of doubtful food."

This incident proves that the actions of the parents even before conception can adversely affect the behaviour of the child.

THE PACT BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE.

A man and his wife once made a pact between themselves that they will both repent for all their sins and endeavour never to commit another sin, so that their children can be pious. A son was born from the couple, who grew up to be very pious and upright. On one occasion, however, the boy stole a fruit from a shop. When the parents got to know of it, the husband asked the wife to admit what had happened. She confessed that she had once eaten a single fruit that hung into her yard from the neighbour's tree. The husband told her that the child's theft was a result of her deed.

Therefore, the first step to pious children is for the parents themselves to be pious. The parents must also not carry out any inappropriate action in front of the children, even though the children may be not of an understanding age. Wise men have stated that the mind of a child is like a mirror, which will reflect every image before it. As they grow, these very images form before them, which they will emulate. Parents should never think that their children will not understand anything. They should bear in mind that everything they do will impact upon the moral values of the child.

The third aspect to pay heed to is to teach children Islaam, urge them to perform the various acts of Deen, and to safeguard them from evils. They should keep the company of pious people, and never be allowed to associate with evil people.

Since the children spend most of their time with their mothers, it will be more important for the mother to devote particular attention to their moral upbringing and social conduct. Of course, the father must also play an active role.

A hadith reports that, on the Day of Qiyamah, children will first grab hold of the scruffs of their parents necks saying, “We lived under you in the world. Why did you feed us haraam food and not lead us to the straight path (by giving us the proper Deeni education)? Today, you will have to answer!” The parents will then lament saying, “Alas! If only we were never parents to anyone, nor seniors over anyone!”

Another hadith reports that every person will be asked on the Day of Qiyamah as to whether he made attempts to guide those under him, or whether he fulfilled their rights.

Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) has mentioned, “Each one of you is a shepherd, and each one of you will be questioned about his flock. A man is a shepherd unto the members of his family.” [Bukhari, Muslim]

Allaah says in the Qur'aan, **“Oh you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from the Fire, the fuel of which is men and stones.”** [Surah Tahreem]

Interpreting this verse, Hadhrat Ali (R.A) mentioned that Allaah is commanding people to educate their families and teach them manners and etiquette. Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas (R.A) says that the verse emphasises that people fulfil Allaah’s orders and induce their families to remember Allaah and save them from Jahannam.

Nabi (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) said that a child should be instructed to perform salaah when he/she is seven years old, and should be punished for neglecting salaah when they are ten. [Abu Dawood]

Ulema say that fasting should also be inculcated at this age so that the children do not neglect these facets when they come of age. They should be imbued with the instinct to abstain from sin and carry out good deeds from a young age.

Rasulullaah (sallAllaahu-alayhi-wa-sallam) also said, “A woman is an overseer over her husband’s home and his children. She will be questioned about them.” Allaah will therefore ask every wife about the manner in which she tended to the affairs of her husband’s home and about the upbringing and education of her children.

IT IS WOMEN WHO GENERALLY SPOIL THEIR CHILDREN.

It is common with certain elderly women that, when they hear of any man perpetrating a misdemeanour, they say, “This is the product of some woman’s spoiling.” By this they mean that the man has either fallen prey to the charms of some lady, or that his mother has spoiled him. Investigation will prove that

the person was a spoiled child. His mother would have been a person who never brought her child up in the correct manner. She would have spoiled him so much that he became unable to distinguish between right and wrong.

Being deprived of a proper religious education, his only aim in life is to earn a living. In achieving this aim, he will not care what measures are taken. If his wife cannot satisfy him, he will easily take to another woman on the streets. He will then be left with nothing in his pockets and none in his house, thereby even jeopardising the interests of his family. All these events are the results of one mother spoiling her son.

A spoiled child will not tolerate the parents withholding things from him, and may even resort to violent measures to get his way. He may even sell his parent's belongings to attain what he wants. If he is allowed to manage the father's business, he is likely to squander the funds, while the parents innocently think that their son is hard at work. It is then too late when the parents hear that the business is reaching bankruptcy, with a large debt to settle. There are thousands of similar incidents, most of which stem from the fact that mothers spoilt their sons, robbing them of their sense of responsibility and loyalty.

A famous Urdu adage reads: "This house was burnt by it's own lamp."

On the other hand, there are those fortunate people who raise excellent children. When such a child passes by, people say, "This is the golden product of some woman." Such unrighteous people were brought up with a healthy blend of praise, affection, reprimanding, punishment and even consolation. As and when the occasion demanded, these people were never deprived of motherly love, coupled with vigilance to observe and correct any faults.

Such people are also the product of a sound education, when they were taught with love and affection, but also reprimanded when deserving thereof. Such a child was imbued with the priceless gems of faith, trustworthiness and noble character traits. Such parents realise that their purpose is not only to grow the child up physically, because elephants and camels are larger in physique. The beauty of a human is in his Imaan, noble character, etiquette and love for humanity. Without any of these, he would be no more than an animal.

It is the good fortune of the mother that she hymns, "Allaah! Allaah!" to the child as she rocks him and puts him to sleep. In this manner, she makes him cognisant of his True Master and Rabb. It is the mother who gently caresses her child's head saying, "Greet with Salaam using both hands, and ask how the person is."

In short, the mother will teach her children certain things like how a parrot is taught, she will feed them better than she eats, and clothe them better than what she wears. It is for this reason that children learn best from their mothers and will remember their mother's teachings forever. A child will flourish into a wonderful adult only after the parents have devoted their attention to a proper upbringing. The child will then truly be a source of pride and joy for the parents, as well as a source of salvation in both worlds.

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